United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

Minnesota Ag News – Farm Computer Usage and Ownership

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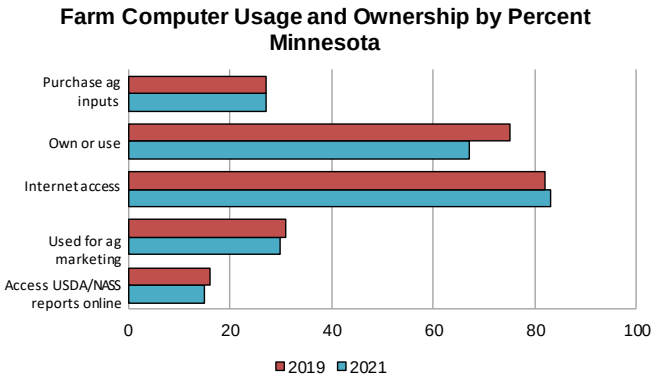
Sixty-seven percent of Minnesota farms own or use a desktop or laptop computer, equal with the U.S. percentage, according to the latest USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service *Farm Computer Usage and Ownership* report. Farms using smart phones for their farm business was 76%, 1 percentage point lower than the national percentage.

Eighty-three percent of Minnesota farms have internet access, up 1 percentage point from 2019. The most common methods of accessing the internet were cellular, broadband (DSL, cable, fiber optic), and satellite connections. Cellular was used to access internet by 71% of Minnesota farms. Fifty percent of farms used broadband to access internet in Minnesota. Satellite was used by 18% of farms.



Farm Computer Usage and Ownership – Minnesota and United States: 2019 and 2021

Farms	Minnesota		United States	
	2019	2021	2019	2021
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)
Own or use desktop or laptop computer [1]	75	67	69	67
Own or use smart phone	(NA)	76	(NA)	77
Own or use a tablet or other portable wireless computer	(NA)	28	(NA)	29
Own or use some other type of computer	(NA)	(Z)	(NA)	2
With Internet access	82	83	75	82
Internet access by paying a cell phone company or ISP	(NA)	99	(NA)	98
Internet access without paying a cell phone company or ISP	(NA)	1	(NA)	2
Purchase agricultural inputs over Internet	27	27	24	29
Conduct agricultural marketing activities over Internet	31	30	19	21
Access USDA NASS reports over Internet	16	15	12	13
Access other USDA reports/services over Internet	25	25	20	22
Access other federal government websites over Internet	22	18	21	21
Conduct business with any USDA website	14	19	11	16
Conduct business with any other Federal government website	9	9	9	12
Conduct business with any non-agricultural website	62	53	53	47
Method of Internet access [2]				
Dialup	(NA)	3	(NA)	2
Broadband (DSL, cable, fiber optic)	(NA)	50	(NA)	50
Cellular	(NA)	71	(NA)	70
Satellite	(NA)	18	(NA)	19
Other	(NA)	1	(NA)	2
Using precision ag practices to manage crops or livestock	(NA)	28	(NA)	25

(NA) Not available.
(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.
[1] 2019 values are not directly comparable to 2021.
[2] Does not add to 100% due to operators with multiple types of internet access.

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Special Note

The questions for the Farm Computer Usage and Ownership questionnaire have changed since the last publication in 2019 to reflect modern internet access and usage. Therefore, there may not be direct comparisons between certain data points. Some changes included reporting multiple types of internet access, consolidating redundant questions, and the addition of a precision agriculture question.

Farm Computer Usage and Ownership Highlights

Nationally, 82% of farms reported having access to the internet with 98% paying for access. In 2021, 29% of farms used the internet to purchase agricultural inputs, which was an increase of 5% from 2019. Additionally, 21% of farms used the internet to market agricultural activities, which was an increase of 2% from 2019. Farms which conducted business with non-agricultural websites in 2021 decreased by 6% to 47%.

In 2021, 50% of internet connected farms utilized a broadband connection while 70% of internet connected farms had access through a cellular data plan. Additionally, 67% of farms had a desktop or laptop computer while 77% of farms had a smart phone.

Precision Agriculture Practices

Beginning in 2021, data were collected for precision agriculture practices with the question: "In the last 12 months, did this farm or ranch use precision agriculture practices to manage crops or livestock? This would include the use of global positioning (GPS) guidance systems, GPS yield monitoring and soil mapping, variable rate input applications, use of drones for scouting fields or monitoring livestock, electronic tagging, precision feeding, robotic milking, etc.." Results are presented at the end of the table.